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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR MANDATORY CATTLE IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

1) Q. *What is the official date for using Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) electronic tags?*

A. Starting March 1, 2007, all cattle must be identified with RFID electronic ear tags **prior** to movement from premises.

2) Q. *When do I, as a producer, have to tag my cattle?*

A.

- Cattle must be tagged if they are leaving the farm to be sold or changing ownership. However, producers are encouraged to tag animals born on their farms while the animals are small.
- Note: This is for cattle only, **not** any other livestock species.

3) Q. *What is the benefit to the state of Michigan for having all cattle electronically identified?*

A.

- Provides assurance for pre-harvest food safety and security.
- Reduces the response time, increases accuracy, and conclusiveness to food borne diseases and to zoonotic diseases.
- Allows Michigan producers to maintain and expand export markets.

4) Q. *Why is Michigan moving to mandatory electronic ear tags for cattle?*

A.

- Provides for faster intra and interstate animal tracking for disease control and eradication programs.
- May be required by USDA for moving the Bovine Tuberculosis Zones to higher TB status (Modified Accredited Advanced to Free Status).
- Possible elimination of random surveillance TB testing of herds outside the Modified Accredited zone.

5) Q. *What organizations/industry groups supported the mandatory program?*

A.

- MDA Bovine Tuberculosis Advisory Committee
- MDA Livestock Identification Advisory Committee
- Michigan Cattlemen's Association
- Michigan Farm Bureau
- Michigan Milk Producer's Association
- Michigan Pork Producer's Association

6) Q. *How does a producer obtain a National Premises Registration Number and/or order tags?*

A. Producers must call Michigan Department of Agriculture at **1-866-870-5136** to receive their National Premises Registration Number and place tag orders.

7) Q. *What is the MDA website for additional information or updates on the mandatory cattle identification program?*

A. The website for additional information or to check for updates on the mandatory cattle identification program is www.michigan.gov/mda and www.michigananimalid.com.

8) Q. *How many premises shall I register?*

A. One or more, depending on whether or not you commingle animals. If you have two herds that are kept separately and never commingled, or located in non-contiguous counties that are miles apart, you may want two premises ID numbers.

9) Q. *Why is Michigan using the USDA 840 RFID electronic tags?*

A. The 840 RFID 15-numeric characters tag is a lifetime number assigned to an individual animal. The tag is never changed unless lost, and then the animal will be retagged at its current premises.

10) Q. *What will happen to the producers that are currently using 982 or 985 ear tags?*

A. These tags will be 'grandfathered' into the system. Once producers use up their supply, then they must order the 840 RFID ear tags.

11) Q. *Do I need an RFID tag on my cattle that I slaughter for personal consumption?*

A. No. However, cattle in the Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ) going to slaughter for personal consumption must be identified with an RFID ear tag.

12) Q. *Will producers in the MAZ have to pay for their RFID tags?*

A. No. The cattle in the MAZ are required to be annually TB tested; therefore, MDA will provide the tags.

13) Q. *When we start using these RFID tags, do we continue to use the metal TB tags that we are currently using?*

A. No. The RFID tags will replace the metal tags beginning March 1, 2007.

14) Q. *Can producers order tags without a premises number?*

A. No. Tags have to be assigned to a premises for traceability.

15) Q. *Will producers need to have a Radio Frequency Reader to read the tags?*

A. No. Both the front and back of the tag will have the 840 15-numeric characters printed on them.

16) Q. *Are terminal feedlots exempt from using RFID tags?*

A. No. Terminal feedlots need RFID tags on cattle.

17) Q. *Will feeder cattle purchased from another state need RFID tags?*

A.

- Yes. If they are sexually intact (heifers & bulls), they will need RFID tags.
- No. If they are not commingled with any Michigan cattle and are shipped direct to a slaughter plant.

****Please note that cattle WILL need an interstate health certificate and be tagged individually before coming into Michigan. Once leaving the feedlot, cattle must still be identified with a metal ear tag.**

18) Q. *Will producers need to purchase a tag applicator?*

A. Yes. RFID tags require a different applicator than bangle tags. If the applicator has the wrong pin, it will destroy the tamperproof tag when applied.

19) Q. How will producers be billed for the tags?

- A. Producers will receive a bill from the Holstein Association for Allflex tags if those tags were ordered through MDA.

20) Q. How much will the tags cost?

- A. The cost of the tags is \$2.00 each and applicator is \$20.00.

21) Q. Where do I apply this new tag?

- A. Apply the tag to the left ear by following the directions supplied with the tags. The left ear is on the left side of the animal as viewed from behind.

22) Q. How do producers order RFID tags through Northstar Cooperative?

- A. Call the following number 1-800-631-3510 for customer service. For questions, ask for Extension 668.

23) Q. Do youth exhibitors in 2007 need their animals identified with RFID tags?

- A. Yes. **All** exhibitors after March 1, 2007 **will** need their animal(s) identified using an RFID tag. All out of state exhibitors who exhibit in Michigan at any show need an RFID tag.

24) Q. Will animals purchased out of state need RFID tags for exhibition in 2007?

- A. Yes. **All** animals purchased out of state and exhibited after March 1, 2007 **will** be required to have an RFID tag.

25) Q. What happens to the RFID tags when the animal arrives at a slaughter plant?

- A. The RFID number is recorded in the database, and the tag is removed then destroyed (if the plant is equipped with an RFID reader). Small custom slaughter facilities are asked to remove tags and retain them until picked up by MDA staff.